



Cathedral City

Commission, Committee and Board Member Policy Manual

**First Edition
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INTRODUCTION

Members of commissions, committees and boards provide an invaluable service to our City. Each member represents a merger of lay and professional talents in the community by coming together with interests, skills, and experience to guide and ensure effective community planning and organization.

Generally, each commission, committee and board has been established by Ordinance and the terms of office, functions powers and duties are defined in the Code.

The following is a list of commission, committee and boards that have been established by Ordinance, by City Council Policy or that the City Council appoints a representative to serve on:

City Commissions, Committee and Boards

Planning Commission

Public Arts Commission

Parks and Community Events Commission

Architectural Review Committee

Finance Advisory Committee

Mobile Home Fair Practices Commission

Board of Appeals

Commissions and Boards of Other Jurisdictions

Palm Springs International Airport Commission

Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control Board

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission

It is important members understand their duties and their role, attend and be prepared for meetings, and contribute to the community. This manual has been prepared to help you understand your role in the governmental structure and to help make your experience inspiring, enjoyable, and productive.

Commission, committee and board members are appointed by the City Council and serve as an advisory body to the City Council and assist the Council in seeing the “big-picture” perspective on community goals, problems and possibilities for improvement.

APPOINTMENT

The City Council makes every effort to give representation on the commissions, committees and boards from a diverse cross-section of citizens. The Cathedral City Municipal Code provides general rules regarding appointments, terms and vacancies for each commission, committee and board. As terms expire and/or vacancies occur, the Council appoints all members following a recruitment process coordinated by the City Clerk’s Office. Interviews are conducted in an open meeting to ensure transparency and equal opportunity for each applicant.

ELIGIBILITY

Unless otherwise provided by law, or by ordinance or resolution of the City Council, all members of Cathedral City commissions, committees and boards shall be initially, and during their incumbencies, bona fide residents and registered voters of the city, except the licensed architect and landscape architect of the architectural review committee and two members of the public arts commission, may come from throughout the Coachella Valley. The appointment of a non-resident made under this provision shall be limited to a term of one year. No such member at or during such time shall be an employee of the city.

ADVISORY BODY ROLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Authority

The function of the commission, committee and board members is primarily advisory to the City Council. The members recommend to the Council the action they think should be taken on specific issues and have no authority to act on their own without City Council concurrence, with the exception of certain Planning Commission action which do not require further Council review.

Relationship with the City Council

Commission, committee and board members are appointed by, and responsible to, the City Council. Members advise and make recommendation to the City Council and may be delegated other powers by the City Council, but the ultimate authority for all policy decisions is the City Council. Unless representing a position taken by the advisory body at a properly agendized public meeting, commission, committee and board members speaking at a public meeting are required to clearly state they are representing their own opinion and not speaking for the body to which they were appointed.

Any communication with the City Council related to advisory body business should be in writing and represent recommendations made by a majority of the group at a public meeting. The written communication should originate from the advisory group to the liaison and then submitted to the City Manager's Office.

Relationships with City Staff

The City Manager shall assign staff to serve as the liaison to the commissions, committees and boards.

The role of the liaison is to provide limited support and advice as well as to motivate and guide the members. The liaison is not a voting member of the body and does not participate in the decision-making process. The liaison serves the commission, committee and board in an advisory capacity, much the same as the commission, committee and boards serve the City Council. They are selected on the basis of their technical abilities and are expected to guide the members with recommendations based upon technical analysis or the situation, regardless of personal opinion. When the liaison disagrees with the body, they are obligated to advise the City Council, through the City

Manager, of the staff recommendation as well as the body's. In making a final decision, the City Council will consider the advice of the body and the staff members, as well as other interested individuals.

Advisory members shall not direct staff or determine the priority of staff work.

Relationship with City Attorney

The City Attorney is responsible for advising the City Council and staff on legal matters. The liaison will obtain any required advice from the City Attorney prior to meeting requiring legal review. The Planning Commission will have the City Attorney present at their meetings.

Relationship with Other Commissions, Committee and Board Members

In order to operate effectively, it is important that advisory groups cooperate and respect each other. One way to develop this rapport is for members to ensure meetings proceed in an orderly manner. The chairperson is responsible for managing the meeting and allocating reasonable time for discussion and deliberation of each item. It is important members prepare for presentations made to the members and thoroughly review the agenda materials before the meeting.

Commission, committee and board members should be aware that individuals bring different experiences and styles to the meetings and represent different perspectives. It is important members respect each other, staff and members of the public. It is also important to remain objective when considering advisory board issues.

Relationships with the Public

Members are encouraged to seek out and become aware of public opinion relating to their commission, committee or board. Public input at meetings should be welcomed, in fact, state law (Brown Act) requires a public comment period at all meetings.

Members should conduct themselves at public meetings in a professional and impartial manner that respects their role and responsibilities, and represents Cathedral City in the best light possible. Members should be considerate of all interests, attitudes, and differences of opinion.

Attendance

Attendance at meetings is vital. When less than a majority of the body attends a regular meeting, the only action that may be taken is to adjourn for lack of quorum. Unless otherwise directed by the chair or a majority of the body, the meeting is automatically adjourned until the next regularly scheduled meeting. Most, if not all, of the meetings will be held in the Council Chambers located at 68-700 Avenida Lalo Guerrero.

Operations, Procedures and Conduct of Meetings

Pursuant to the Municipal Code, unless otherwise provided by law, or by ordinance or resolution, each commission, committee or board shall annually, at its first meeting held after June 30th, choose one of its number as chairperson and one as vice chairperson.

Each chairperson and vice chairperson shall have authority and perform such duties as are commonly associated with their respective titles. Vacancies in either such position occurring prior to July 1st may be filled as in the first instance, and a new chairperson or vice chairperson may be chosen at any time by majority vote of all members of the board or commission.

All commission, committees or boards shall meet regularly, as needed, in a set location. The Chairperson shall maintain order and decorum throughout the meeting. All meetings shall be conducted according to the Brown Act.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Brown Act

The Ralph M. Brown Act provides that all meetings of a legislative body, which includes the City Council, boards, commissions, and committees, shall be open and public with all persons permitted to attend. A meeting is defined as “a quorum of the advisory body discussing or deliberating on subject matter related to the legislative body.” The Brown Act prohibits a quorum from meeting privately or without notice. Serial meetings, where a quorum of the members uses any direct communication, personal intermediaries or technological devices to develop a collective concurrence as to action to be taken, are also prohibited since this exchange can occur outside the public meeting process.

All meetings must be properly noticed under the Brown Act. The agenda for regular meetings must be posted in a location accessible to the public at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Agendas for special meetings must be posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Regular minutes of such meetings shall be maintained and available for public inspection.

Ethics Training (AB 1234)

In order to meet the requirements of State law (AB 1234), all appointed Planning Commissioners are required to receive no less than two hours of training in general ethics principles and ethics laws every two years. Per Council Policy, all members of commissions, committees and boards shall receive two hours of approved training in general ethics principles and ethics laws every two years. Newly appointed advisory members must complete the required ethics training within 60 days of appointment. On-site training may be available as well as on-line training through the Fair Political Practices Commission’s website. Members who fail to complete the training will not be allowed to attend commission, committee or board meetings until completed and are subject to dismissal from the advisory body.

Conflict of Interest (Form 700)

All members of the Planning Commission are required to file annual Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700) with the Fair Political Practices Commission upon assuming or leaving office. State law requires that designated individuals who make or participate in making governmental decisions that could affect their personal economic

interests file the Form 700. Members who fail to file the Form 700 as requested are subject to an administrative fine and dismissal from the advisory body.

Code of Ethics

Each member of a commission, committee, board, ad-hoc committee and task force shall acknowledge, by signature, that they fully understand the principles set forth in the adopted Code of Ethics and that they will abide by them.

Social Media/Public Meetings/City Events

Each member of a commission, committee, board, ad-hoc committee and task force shall, at all times, conduct themselves as a representative of the City. When representing the City via Social Media at a Public Meeting or during a City Event, they shall remain professional and civil in nature. In no case shall a representative of the City do the following on social media, during a public meeting or City event, when representing the City:

- Use content and/or language a reasonable person would find offensive, including but not limited to profane, obscene, or pornographic content and/or language;
- Use content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, religion, gender, gender expression, gender identity, disability, medical condition, genetic information, sexual orientation, marital status or any other protected class;
- Use defamatory or libelous content;
- Issue threats to any person or organization;
- Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product/service for sale;
- Conduct themselves in violation of any federal, state or local law;
- Encourage illegal activity;
- Provide information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Provide information that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

No commission, committee, board, ad-hoc and task force member shall make a statement on social media nor to the media regarding a City event or news release without approval from the Communications and Events Manager. Commission, committee, board, ad-hoc and task force members may re-post or share all media releases from the City.

Removal from Office

The City Council may, at its sole and absolute discretion, remove a member from office at any time. The reasons for removal may include, but are not limited to:

1. The City Council determines that it would be in the best interest of the City to remove a member.

2. A member has incurred 3 or more unexcused absences from regular meetings during any 12-month period.
3. A member has failed to complete the mandatory ethics training (AB 1234).
4. A member has failed to file their Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700).
5. A member fails to acknowledge and conform to the Code of Ethics.
6. A member fails to comply with the Social Media/Public Meeting/City Event section of this policy manual.
7. A member has violated the Oath of Office.
8. A member has been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude.
9. A member of a City commission, committee or board ceases to be a registered voter of the City.

Resignation

Commission, committee and board members may resign at any time.

**Commitment to Abide by
The Cathedral City Commission, Committee and Board Member Manual**

I have received and read the City of Cathedral City Commission, Committee and Board Member Policy Manual and fully understand the principles as set forth and agree to abide by them.

Date: _____

Signature

Print Name

Name of Office

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Date: _____

Signature

Print Name

Name of Office